

Commander's Voice

A time to remember, a time to welcome

I'd like to extend a welcome to the newly arriving OIF 06-08 Coalition units, including the 25th Infantry Division Headquarters which replaced the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) as the command element for Multi-National Division-North and the 13th Sustainment Command which replaced the 3rd Corps Support Command.

We also have numerous coalition force units, brigade combat teams, separate brigades and Marine Corps battalions rotating into Iraq this month.

Welcome to all of the new Coalition units and farewell to those who have completed their deployments and are heading home; thanks for a job well done!

I'd also like to congratulate Lieutenant General Ali and the Iraqi Ground Forces Command for assuming command of the 8th and 4th Iraqi Army Divisions this month. We look forward to continuing our work with the IGFC as they increase their command responsibilities through the fall.

One of the most striking aspects of the mission in Iraq is how much

the situation on the ground can change from month to month and year to year. For example, at the beginning of this year the Coalition was engaged in primarily a counterinsurgency campaign against insurgents and terrorists whose goals were to undermine the Coalition's efforts and the legitimacy of the Iraqi government. In eight months, and sparked by the bombing of the Al Askari Mosque (also known as the Golden Mosque) in Samarra on February 22, the

primary threat to the success of the Iraqi government has shifted to sectarian violence, with Sunni and Shia extremists attempting to draw the rest of the country into a

larger civil conflict.

In partnership with the Iraqi Government, Army and Police, the Coalition is taking aggressive steps to reverse the surge of violence and establish the stability required for Iraq to move forward. The lesson learned for the new Coalition members is that we must always be prepared for changes in our operational environment and flexible enough to respond accordingly.

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**MNC-I COMMANDER
LT. GEN. PETER W.
CHIARELLI**

We've done a tremendous job thus far and will undoubtedly be challenged by the unexpected again in the future.

Finally, I'd like to take a moment to remember those who suffered five years ago on September 11, 2001. On that day, the forces of extremism struck a blow that changed many of our lives forever. Nearly 3,000 innocent people from more than 90 nationalities died in the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and in Pennsylvania. Let us remember their sacrifices on this fifth anniversary of the attacks and the sacrifices that have been made since in the war on terror.

Spearhead!